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A Whole New Ballgame Overseas

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AS A high-level aide to John C. Danforth, **Michael Makovsky** discovered early that he shared at least two interests with the U.S. senator from Missouri.

"Danforth is an avid Cardinals fan and genuinely cares about Israel," Makovsky said, and those are "subjects that I'm really interested in."

When he leaves soon for Israel, he's "really going to miss listening to their games and reading about the Cardinals."

Makovsky, a Post-Dispatch scholar-athlete eight years ago, now hopes to launch a career in Israel's foreign service. He was born in St. Louis, is an alumnus of Block Yeshiva High School here and graduated with honors from the University of Chicago, where he majored in history of American foreign affairs, with a minor in British history.

Apparently the 25-year-old St. Louisan found the road to Washington a natural progression. He worked as a free-lance researcher there for Republicans on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee before joining Danforth's staff in the summer of 1987.

After six months as a legislative correspondent for Danforth, Makovsky was offered a full-time job as Danforth's assistant press secretary.

Danforth found Makovsky useful in pressing the Soviet Union on human rights.

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"I wrote a letter to Gorbachev," Makovsky recalled, "urging the release of Joseph Begun and Gregory Rosenstein. Begun was a leader of the original 'refuseniks.'

"In fact, I put through a call to Begun in Moscow and translated, in Hebrew and English, a conversation between him and Danforth."

Two months later, Begun was allowed to immigrate to Israel.

Makovsky feels strongly about moving to Israel, where he'll have to serve a stretch in the army before entering the country's foreign service.

Having attended a Jerusalem high school for a semester in 1978, he began focusing on a possible move to Israel three years ago.

After his graduation from the University of Chicago, he worked for then-Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

"I would write weekly news summaries on what United States and British newspapers were saying about Israel in general and Peres in particular," Makovsky noted.

"Peres, of all Israeli officials, is sensitive about his image and foreign perception of his country."

Peres now is finance minister under the new coalition government.

Makovsky also wrote media analyses about the Pollard spy case, which strained relations between the United States and Israel two years ago. Pollard currently is serving a prison term in the federal penitentiary in Marion, Ill.

Makovsky's immediate superior during this period was Uri Savir, now consul general for Israel in New York. Savir served as an intermediary between Makovsky and Peres and, last November, encouraged Makovsky to enter the Israeli foreign service.

Makovsky's father, Donald I. Makovsky, is executive director of Block Yeshiva High, which graduated its first class eight years ago. The younger Makovsky was a member of that class. He excelled in track, basketball and cross country.

His father and grandfather are also fervent fans of the Cardinals. His grandfather, Jack Makovsky, "took me to my first game when I was only 5," **Michael Makovsky** recalled, "and I've been hooked ever since."

Actually, the Makovsky family can be said to be a farm system for Israel. Another son, David, 28, currently is working on his master's degree in journalism at Harvard.

"David and I have similar interests," Makovsky said. "He's a journalist, and I hope to be the diplomat in the family. When he leaves Harvard, we'll meet in Jerusalem. He will be a political correspondent for the Jerusalem Post as well as Israeli correspondent for U.S. News and World Report."

Makovsky doesn't delude himself about leaving the United States and living in Israel.

"I recognize the difficulties involved," he said. "This is a democratic, fun country, and living in suburbia makes it all the more difficult to leave.

"But I have strong feelings about helping to build a Jewish state. There's an excitement about living in a young country that's only 41 years old, a country with problems on its borders. It's like returning to your roots."

Under Israel's Law of Return, Makovsky immediately will enjoy dual citizenship. He doesn't plan to renounce his U.S. citizenship.

Makovsky speaks fondly of his association with Danforth. "We both wanted to read the Post's sports section about what the Cardinals did the night before," he said. "If I got the paper first, I'd copy the sports section for him. And at night, I'd listen to KMOX and the play-by-play of Cardinal games."

His experience and background with both the Israeli and U.S. governments, Makovsky said, should operate in his favor. The foreign service exam is a seven-month process, and he concedes that his move to Israel "is not practical and was not an easy decision."

"But I'm looking forward to returning here in the fall for the playoffs and World Series," he said.

Jack Herman is a St. Louis free-lance writer.

PHOTO (COLOR). St. Louisan **Michael Makovsky** hopes to join Israel's foreign service.

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